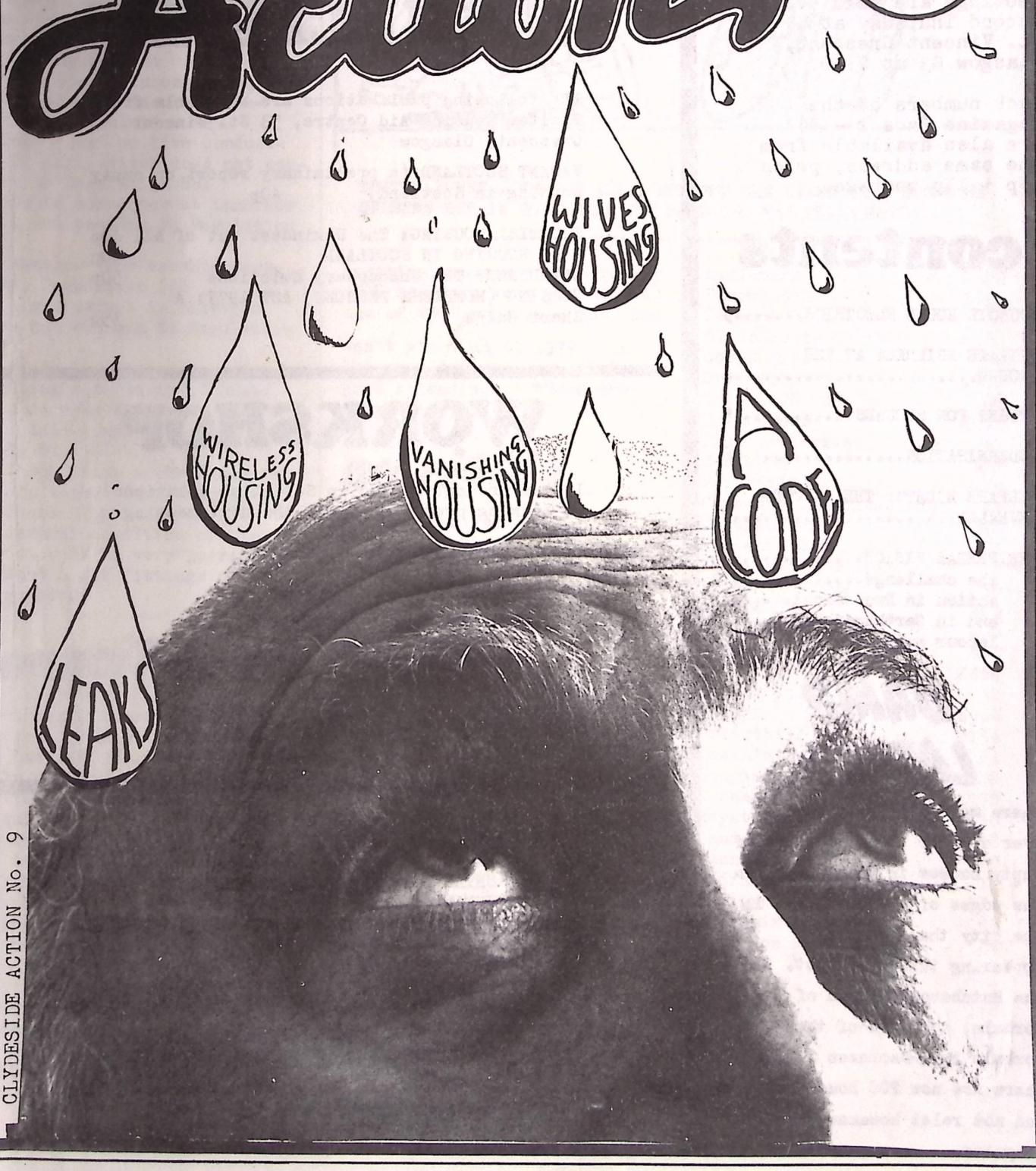
T/SOC/22/7/19

Clydeside Action

15p



CLYDESIDE ACTION No. 9

Clydeside Action

HELP

CLYDESIDE ACTION is looking for people to help produce and sell the magazine.

Meetings are held every second Thursday at 53 St. Vincent Crescent, Glasgow G3 at 7:30.

Back numbers of the magazine (nos 2 - 8) are also available from the same address, price 15p + 11p postage.

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DAMP LATEST

There may still be arguments over whether there are lots of empty houses in the schemes on the edges of Glasgow, but, in the city the emptys are appearing thick and fast. In the Hutchesonton area of the Gorbals, the home of the Gorbals Anti-Dampness Campaign there are now 200 houses vacated and not relet because of the dampness.

CHYP

COUNCIL FOR HOUSING YOUNG PEOPLE

We need two volunteers (25+) to join two existing volunteers helping in mixed house for 8 teenagers previously in care.

For details phone 946 9207 after 6.00p.m.

SHELTER

The following publications are available from Shelter Housing Aid Centre, 53 St. Vincent Crescent, Glasgow

VACANT SCOTLAND (a preliminary report on empty housing in Scotland) 40p

SCOTTISH HOUSING: The Unkindest Cut of All 40p
TIED HOUSING IN SCOTLAND 50p
EDINBURGH: The Unecessary Evictions 50p
HOUSING (HOMELESS PERSONS) ACT 1977: A Short Guide 35p

WORKSHOP

If you are interested in Socialist solutions to housing problems attend the next meeting of the

SCOTTISH HOUSING WORKSHOP
on
Saturday, 23 September, 1978
at: Workers Educational Association
Riddles Court,
Lawnmarket
Edinburgh.

For details contact:
Olga Holloway 05785 288 (H)
031 667 1011 x6826 (W)

RIGHTS

CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP
NATIONAL WELFARE RIGHTS HANDBOOK
ALL THE LATEST RATES
Supplementary Benefits, National Insurance, Family Income Supplement, Health and Welfare Benefits, Rent and Rate Rebates, Education Benefits, Non-contributory Benefits for the Disabled, Local Authority Help for the Chronically Sick and Disabled, The Family Fund, Legal Aid and Advice

60pence + 15pence p&p

SHOCK, HORROR!

Recently, in Govanhill, the Tenants Association paid a qualified electrician to survey a number of Council houses.

faults

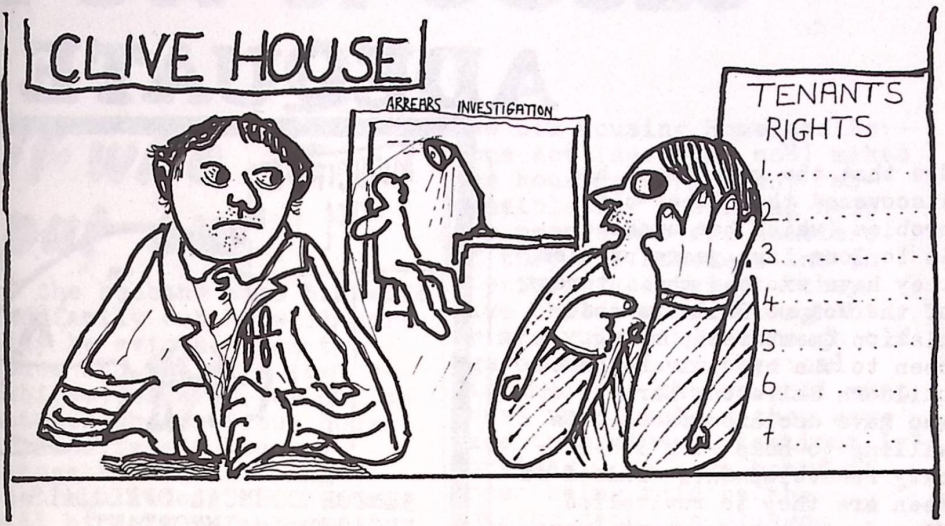
The results were fairly typical for 1930-38 Act houses with original electrical wiring. The report for one house on Aikenhead road showed the following faults:

1. Two 15-amp fuses at main board have no means of isolation. Regulation A2
2. Tape joint on live conductor at hall switch does not conform to Regulation B61
3. Cable connector at immersor does not conform to Regulation B34
4. Immersor not earthed properly. Regulation C48
5. light switch in bathroom does not conform to Regulation D17
6. earth loop impedance of lighting circuit is 10 ohms. This is well above the maximum laid down in Regulation Table D1
7. Three 5 amp sockets and one 15 amp socket do not conform to Regulation table C2 note 2
8. General condition of lighting circuit is very poor; all pendant light fittings should be renewed.

council acts!

The Tenants Association presented this particular report to the District Council who actually did something! They rewired the whole lighting circuit and they stripped out the sockets - which they said the tenant had fitted - and left him with a socket in the kitchen and a socket in the living room. Which, according to the Council regulations, was all he was ever entitled to.

The District's policy is to leave the rewiring of 1930-38 Act houses till the modernisation programme arrives. Post-war houses are to have a rewiring programme at a rate of 4000 houses a year (at an average of £500 a house), but this won't start until 1979. In the meantime the council is just attending to those who complain.....



THAT'S FUNNY...WHEN I ASKED HER HOW SHE LIKED THAT HOUSE WE OFFERED HER IN GOVANHILL SHE SAID SHE WAS DE-LIGHTED

no rights

The problem is that tenants have no rights to ensure that they have an adequately wired house - except where the wiring is actually dangerous, in which case the Public Health Act is enforcible. The Housing Acts only stipulate that a house must have an adequate means of artificial heating and lighting; and the Building Regulations, which stipulate fairly high electrical standards (4 sockets in the living room - 5 in the kitchen) is only enforcible in new building or when major conversions are carried out.

programme

According to Glasgow District Council the following postwar schemes are in 'urgent need of rewiring' :-

Auldhouse	403
Balornock & Robroyston	504
Barlanark	2322
Barmulloch	1194
Berwick Drive	36
Blairdardie North	589
Coween St.	78
Cranhill	1951
Crathie Drive	80
Drumchapel	2894
Drumover Drive	37
Eastwood	565
Fairfield	126
Garscube (Knightswood)	44
Garthamlock	998
Househillwood	14
Knightswood Cross	14
Ladybank Drive	36
Mansewood	600
Maukinfauld Rd.	200
Merrylee Rd.	658
Milton	2464
Orkney St.	32
Pollok	4968
Priesthill	2156
Queen's Drive	24
Roughmussel	148
Ruchazie	1578
Royston Rd.	156
Sandyhills Rd.	18
Sannox Gdns.	70
Thornliebank Rd.	10
Thornwood	234
Traquair Drive	58
Craigton Road	44
Spittal	501
Minard Rd.	2
Hillend Rd.	114
Mansionhouse/Carmyle	70
Blairbeth	251
Milrig	10
Mill St.	30
Princes St.	16

NEW HOUSES OR ADEQUATE PROFITS

Now that the government has discovered the 'inner-city' problem (which has enabled it to lose last years problem) they have excited the interest of the Volume Builders Association (membership being open to the big private house-builders Salveson, Barratt etc.) who have declared themselves willing to help with inner city redevelopment. Indeed so keen are they to revitalise Glasgow that they started by taking senior officials of the District Council to dinner recently.

spirit

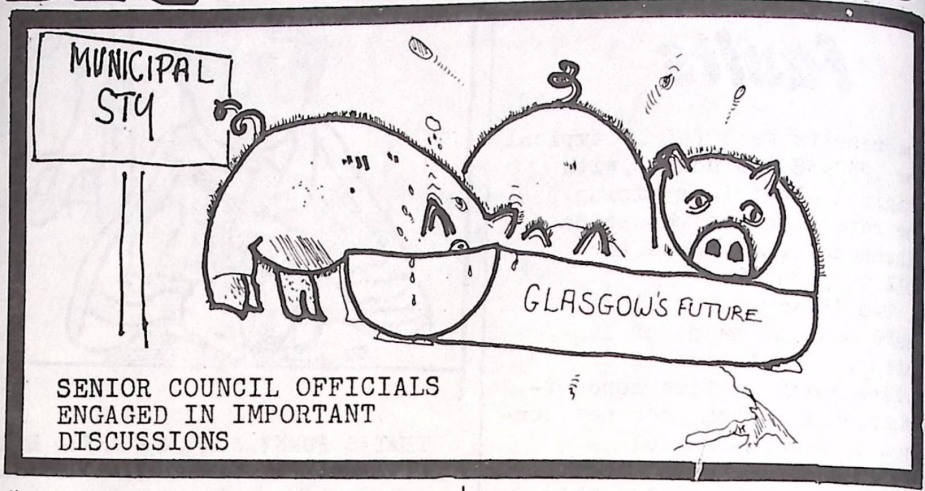
Such public spirit has, of course a price as a paper submitted to the District Council by the Volume Builders Association shows. It states:
"The principal objective of any housebuilding company is to make and continue to make an adequate profit"

The paper gives their thoughts on making the building of houses for sale in the inner city profitable.

They argue that building costs in the inner city are "undoubtedly higher" than building on green fields at the edge of the city. This in turn means that house prices will be cheaper in the suburbs, the only way to make the inner-city houses saleable they argue is for the government to subsidise the builders (and hence the owner-occupiers) to build houses.

The other alternative is for the District council to give the builders the land for nothing and provide the roads and sewers free of charge.

They also argue that in order to make the inner city sufficiently attractive to owner occupiers, for instance better schools must be provided



SENIOR COUNCIL OFFICIALS ENGAGED IN IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS

"For family oriented buyers better schools are considered to be a very important attraction of suburbia quite apart from the fact that little Jimmy will be mixing with rather better behaved kids than in the city schools"

vandalism

In the long term however the problems of the inner city will be solved:

"The level of theft, vandalism, and violence endemic in the inner city will only be reversed when large areas have been redeveloped or rehabilitated for owner-occupation"

However the virtues of the owner-occupiers have recently appeared less obvious. It is less than a year since Wimpeys appeared at a public inquiry into their plans to build private houses in the green belt at Cambuslang.

One of the major arguments used by Wimpeys was that although their proposed development would be on good quality agricultural land, in fact its productivity was severely impaired by vandalism? And where, they were asked, did these vandals come from? Ah well, it appeared they were the children of the owner-occupiers in the adjoining, recently built Wimpy estate. Wait until they get to the inner city.....

If evidence were needed as to how the Volume Builders proposals will be received at the District Council we can look to the fact that the Director of Planning appeared hand in hand (if not dinner in stomach) at the inquiry in support of the developers after he had effectively misled his own planning committee into supporting the proposal

Despite the support of Glasgow District and Strathclyde Regional Councils, Wimpey's application was rejected by the Reporter who heard the appeal and by the government.

So they may have no choice but to build in the inner city. But, if its to be at a price, this means diverting resources from elsewhere, perhaps from the peripheral estates.

p.s.

It seems that the catering trade are to be first industry to be revived by this new found interest in the inner-city. Management consultants Cooper-Lybrand recently entertained senior officials from the District Council , Strathclyde Region and the Scottish Development Agency to dinner and a discussion on urban renewal.

HOUSES FOR SPOUSES

THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT CHANGES for women made in the past year in Glasgow District Council's house letting regulations. Previously women who were living apart from their bands faced many problems in getting a council house of their own or a right to a house they had lived in for perhaps a number of years. These problems were outlined in Clydeside Action No 1.

couples separating

In most council houses the husband is the tenant which means that the wife has no rights over the house, not even the right to stay in it. Up until now the housing department have not tried to resolve these problems for fear that they were intervening in domestic matters. They also refused to house the displaced party and continued to treat the couple as one family unit although they had quite clearly split up.

Now women, and men, are not to be refused accomodation merely because their spouse is already a council tenant

if husband leaves

If the husband leaves the family home the District Council has agreed that the wife should get the tenancy in her own name, unless excessive underoccupancy would result. This applies also to couples who are not legally married but who have lived together for at least nine months.

if wife is put out

If the husband puts his wife and family out he will normally be evicted from the house and the wife (or cohabitee) offered the choice between the previous house or a different house altogether. According to the regulations the husband will himself be rehoused, which is an important and forward looking change considering the problems of homeless single people.

Presumably this procedure will not apply where the tenant puts out only his wife and not the children as well. In this type of situation it is not clear if the ejected spouse would be rehoused if the tenant had custody of the children.

if wife leaves

Neither is it clear what procedure will be followed when the wife leaves the home voluntarily. Under a previous change in the regulations she would be eligible for rehousing as long as she could prove that she had been living apart from him for at least six weeks.

The new Housing Homeless Persons Act (see C.A. no8) makes the housing department responsible for providing help for people who are homeless. If they are homeless and in a priority category - they have children, are pregnant or are vulnerable through old age or mental or physical disability - the council must house them, unless they have made themselves"intentionally" homeless. We have heard of women being told by the housing dept. in Glasgow that they were intentionally homeless because they left their husbands and therefore they would not be rehoused!

Hopefully this unfair interpretation of the housing department's duties is only an occasional anomaly and not the general view. Besides this, any woman who could satisfy the six weeks separation requirement would be eligible for rehousing as a normal list applicant.

rent arrears

The situation is considerably complicated where the husband owes rent arrears, Some while ago the housing dept. would refuse to house people whose spouses owed rent for a previous tenancy, even if they had not been living together at the time the debt mounted up. Sometimes people who were not even married had to pay off their cohabitee's debts!

"AS DIRECTOR OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT, I THINK, I CAN SAFELY SAY THAT THESE NEW PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE PROGRESSIVE AND ENLIGHTENED ATTITUDE OF THE STAFF HERE AT CLIVE HOUSE AND BY THE COMMITTED, CARING AND THOUGHTFUL ATTITUDES OF THE COUNCILLORS ON THE HOUSING COMMITEE, AND BY THE PEOPLE OF GLASGOW THEMSELVES, IT IS NOT FOR NOTHING THAT THIS CITY, IS NOTED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, NOT ONLY FOR THE NUMBER & BEAUTY OF ITS PARKS, BUT ALSO FOR THE FRIENDLINESS OF ITS PEOPLE..... AND (COUGH, COUGH) THE LARGE NUMBER OF EMPTY HOUSES....."

publicity

After considerable publicity and campaigning by Shelter and other groups the rules were changed in August 76 so that a woman would not be asked to pay their husbands debts provided she could give documentary proof that they were living apart or divorced and proof that she was not living in the house when the debt was incurred.

Now the regulations have been changed again so that separated women will not have to pay off their husbands rent arrears even if they lived in the house when the arrears were accumulated This is a sensible decision since many women find it impossible to ensure regular payment of rent if their husbands are the ones with the wages.

Unfortunately women are still getting asked to pay off their husband's debts, not for a different house, but for transfer of the husband's tenancy to the wife. Such a choice is not an enviable one for the wife to have to make, and is probably outwith the intention behind the recent changes in the regulations. A woman who had opted for the home she was used to living in but had to pay part of her husband's arrears as a condition of getting the tenancy since the change in the regulations (May 1978) would have good grounds for contacting her local councillor to complain that the council's decisions were not being fairly applied.

elsewhere

Glasgow's changes are very important for women who up until now may have lost their homes as well as their marriages. But not all districts are necessar moving in the same directi since they are under no legal obligation to do so, apart from their duty to house certain categories o homeless people.

The Scottish Law Commissio has recently recommended some changes in the law. Some of their provisional proposals include giving people the right to occupy the family home even if the are not the tenant or owner of it, the courts having th power to transfer tenancies from one spouse to the othe and making interdicts again domestic violence more effective.

keep Britain's builders free

The Department of Architecture of Glasgow District Council recently produced a paper (not public, of course) on the modernisation of public sector houses, from this document we reproduce the dept's comments on the performance of the private builders.

"To date only a handful of contractors have shown that they can do the job well, several firms perform indifferently and some, including well known names, have failed dismally".

Nationally the construction industry has been attacking local authority direct works departments and latterly proposals to nationalise the building industry. Glasgow has become a focus for this campaign with local Tories leading the attack against the building department. All of which has taken attention away from the lamentable performance of the private builders.

This is especially true in modernisation where all the work is done by private contractors.

"While the progress is reasonably satisfactory some contractor's attention to the numerous contract requirements directed at tenant's welfare, security, preservation of the environment etc. still leaves much to be desired".

"The execution of some contracts, notably Penilee, Cuthelton St. and Mill Rd. did not however proceed as expected leading to some serious delays which not only created a short-fall in completions 76/77 but also left considerable sums allocated in Capital estimates unexpended. While Cuthelton St delays have been caused clearly by contractor's inefficeency, Penilee and Mill Rd. suffered from both indifferent perfor mance by contractors and novel and unusual scope of work for which our targets may have been somewhat optimistic".

Bear all of the above in mind when you hear that the council will be trying to increase the numbers of houses modernised.

WELFARE RIGHTS

THE 'A' CODE REVEALED

In past issues of Clydeside Action we have dealt with particular details of the administration of supplementary benefit. In the last issue we covered in some detail the annual report of the DHSS as a way of illustrating some general principles about supplementary benefit. In this issue we examine in greater detail the 'A' code which is the basic document which governs the payment of benefit by the local Social Security Offices. For the thousands of people who live on S.B., this is the document that regulates their lives - and it is secret!

SECRETS

The 'A' code comes into the following category of official secrets:

"RESTRICTED: Where unauthorised disclosure would be undesirable in the interests of the Nation. (The phrase the"interests of the nation" should be interpreted broadly to include not only defence, but also economic political, and commercial information requiring protection because its disclosure would lead to political embarassment hampering good government.)
1. Cabinet memoranda.
2. Draft legislation.
3. Department books of instruction and training, and certain technical documents.
4. Routine departmental instruction (eg. administration of Social Security payments.)

The 'A' code is only the basic rule book but with its attached circulars, it is nearly 2000 pages long. And there are other codes: AX dealing with fraud investigations, and LR dealing with liable relatives. The 'A' code is paragraph numbered from A1 to A8850.

It is obviously impossible to cover completely the contents of the 'A' code, so instead we have chosen sections that either cover very common problems faced by claimants or sections that illustrate general principles about the way in which the supplementary benefit system operates.

Remember,however, that just because something is in the 'A' code it isn't necessarily right or legal and much of what is said can be challenged on appeal.

These paragraphs contain not only instructions on when or when not to pay out money, but also general guidance to staff. social security staff. eg.

"A 7368 It is very important that any appearance of forming a moral judgement that may influence action in relation to unmarried mothers should be avoided, whether they be British or immigrants. It should be remembered that the customs of immigrant races in their own countries may be quite different from those of this country. In the West Indies for example, it has long been socially acceptable for people to live together outside marriage."

Or:

"A7011 Whatever the attitude of the claimant, a quiet understanding but business-like approach is the one which is most likely to succeed (sometimes only after considerable time) in winning the claimant's confidence and obtaining his co-operation."

Which sounds very nice, but the trusting claimant may well end up being the poor claimant. For instance, in Appendix 18 which gives clothes prices(see below), the officer is instructed to pay the prices given except where the claimant says that they can get clothes cheaper. Or, for instance, the section on "trade disputes" ie strikes:

STRIKES

"A 4866 If a person without dependants is regarded as being involved in the dispute, he should be informed, orally before a claim is taken that he is disqualified for supplementary Benefit under the Supplementary Benefit Act. If he insists on making a claim, he should be told that he can only be helped if he is in urgent need, and that any payment is made entirely at the Supplementary Benefit Commission's discretion in accordance with the rules they have laid down and publicised for single claimants involved in disputes. If he does not know the rules they should be explained to him by reference to leaflet SB2 about payment of SB during trade disputes. He should then be told that evidence to substantiate his statement may be required. If despite this advice he still insists on making a claim, this should be taken in the normal way."

CPAG SPECIAL

In other words the officers are instructed to tell a lie, that's why they are told not to write the initial refusal of benefit to the claimant down, only if the claimant persists will they then admit that there are a whole series of grounds for paying single strikers. The claimant is still up against it:

"A4867. If a claim is taken from a person without dependants on the grounds of urgent need, it should be scrutinised critically".

BUS FARES

The persistent claimant may also discover that s/he can also claim bus-fares, BUT the SB officer who is interviewing will not suggest such a claim is made. The 'A' code advises as follows:

"A4868a The instructions in A4496-4498 should be applied if a striker attending the area office or a special centre asks about his fares, with the following modifications:

1) Reimbursement should only be considered on a hardship basis, i.e. if there is no capital or disregarded income.
2) Payment should only be made if -
a) the return cost is 50p or more, and
b) either the distance travelled to the office is more than 4 miles, or there are unusual difficulties involved, eg adverse weather, or some personal disability."

ALLOWANCES

To continue with the treatment of strikers, Circular 318 (Payment of Supplementary Benefit to Firemen on their return to work) says:
"Heating Allowances - except where supplementary benefit appeal tribunals have decided otherwise, additions should not normally be given for extra heating or central heating. They will be appropriate only where health is at risk"
This applies to all strikers not just the firemen, but for non-striking claimants the central heating addition is usually automatic!

PAYMENTS

It is clear that the officers of the DHSS are instructed to
a)minimise the amount of money they pay out;
b)mislead strikers as to their rights; and
c)act on behalf of the government and employers to force strikers back to work.

CODE WORDS

HAs

5. Except where Supp B Appeal Tribunals have decided otherwise additions should not normally be given for extra heating or central heating. They will be appropriate only where health is at risk. Any addition should be excluded from the assessment of protected earnings.

HQ DHSS
18 January 1978

Distribution: Holders of Code A

HARDSHIP

If you leave a job without, what the national insurance officer decides is a good reason you will be suspended from unemployment benefit for six weeks, you can however claim supp. b. but it will be reduced by up to 40% (even though you may be appealing against the insurance officer's decision) BUT
"A3602 The majority of cases in which unemployment benefit is disallowed arise immediately following a period during which the claimant was in employment. Most claimants affected should, therefore,be able to bear, without difficulty, the normal reduction in their requirements in the ensuing period. Staff should however be on the alert for possible hardship, particularly if any of the following circumstances occur:

1)the claimant's last employment was of short duration,
2)the claimant's recent earnings were low in relation to his committments,
3)unmet rent , mortgage capital repayments or hire purchase repayments any of which cannot be met from disregarded income or capital,
4) sickness or very young children in the family,
5) the claimant's wife is pregnant,
6) the family faces any unusual difficulty (even though temporary)

The claimant should always be given the doubt on any question of hardship arising in this connection." and

MITIGATING HARDSHIP

"A3603 A discretionary addition should be made where necessary to avoid hardship but, unless the circumstances are very exceptional, a reduction of at least £1.00 should be operated in order to preserve the principle that disqualification from receiving or suspension of, unemployment benefit for industrial misconduct should not be a matter of indifference to the claimant."

SURPRISE VISITS

All supplementary benefit claimants have to be visited at regular intervals while they remain on benefit. Usually the visit is preceded by a letter, but, if the claimant doesn't receive a letter then it probably means that there is a suspicion of fraud.

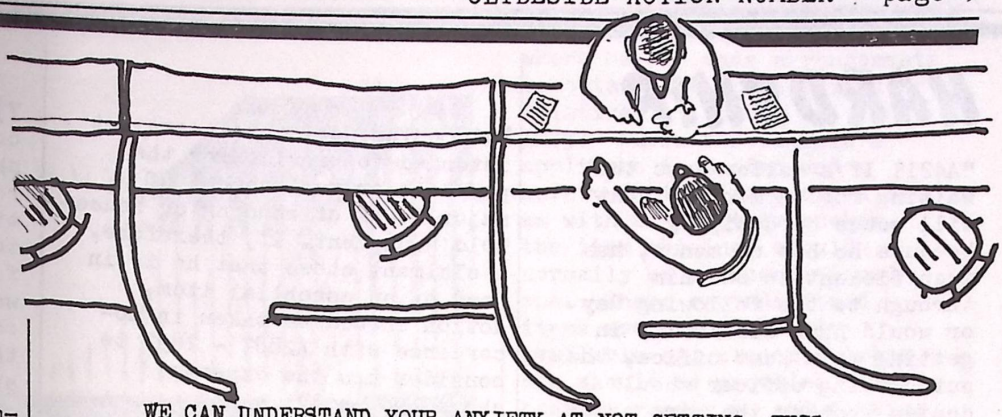
"A6181 - Notification of intended visits in review cases does reduce the number of ineffective visits, but it also makes it possible for a certain type of claimant to take steps to "set the stage" for the visiting officer and to obtain S.B. to which he is not entitled. Such cases are not always easy to detect, but the following are examples:

EXAMPLES

1) the unemployed able-bodied claimant (including women not required to register because they have dependant children) who is suspected of working. As a rule do not notify intended visits until it is established that the case is straightforward,
2)the woman whose claim to be a deserted wife is not free from doubt. Do not notify visits if the whereabouts are unknown,
3) the single woman who is suspected of cohabiting. In this case the need to make surprise visits applies as in (2)."

SUSPICION

It is always useful to know when one is suspected of fraud for although a charge is never brought the suspicion alone may be used to deny benefits. The powers of the DHSS enable them to withold or reduce benefit without giving a reason, and waiting for their decision can be a harrowing experience. The extract below doesn't explicitly refer to benefit, but it does illustrate clearly how suspicion



WE CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR ANXIETY AT NOT GETTING THIS BENEFIT.....SO I HAVE BEEN AUTHORISED TO TELL YOU THAT THE REASON YOU DO NOT FALL INTO THE CATEGORY OF CLAIMANTS ENTITLED TO THIS BENEFIT IS...THAT YOU DO NOT FALL INTO THE CATEGORY OF CLAIMANTS ENTITLED TO THIS BENEFIT.

(perhaps unfounded, perhaps based on gossip), can be used against a claimant.

CONDITIONS

If a claimant satisfies numerous conditions viz:- physical/mental handicap, too old, not worked during the previous year, has registered for work 39 weeks of the year, has not refused work, has not been unemployed through lack of effort to find work, has no prospect of work in the near future, and has not been receiving unemployment benefit AND ALSO A6603 (8) there is "no positive evidence or uncleared suspicion of fraudulent claim during the past two years" then.... s/he can sign on quarterly instead of weekly.

TACT

Needless to say, this concession is not well publicised. If a claimant asks about it then:-
"A6618 If a claimant who has not been selected for quarterly attendance asks the reason why it does not apply to him, it will generally be sufficient to explain that he does not fall within the categories of claimant for whom this concession is approved. Tact and discretion will however be necessary in dealing with such an enquiry, if the reason for non-selection involves a suspicion of fraud or voluntary unemployment which has never been established. There is no right of appeal against non-selection for quarterly signing."

Notice that the officer only informs the claimant that s/he does not fall into the right category, and that no attempt is made to explain what the conditions for admission might be.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Getting cash or a giro in a hurry can often involve a great deal of argument and waiting about but the rules are not complicated, but they do leave a lot to the discretion of the DHSS officers (and the right of appeal is not a lot of use on a Friday night when you've got no money for the weekend)

"A4210 What is wanted is that claimants should come to accept and expect that payments due to them will be made through the post by Giro order. Insofar as it is reasonable,& in the interests of providing a better service to callers, the issue of Giro orders over the counter should be avoided, although of course it will be necessary in certain circumstances, notably the homeless claimant and the claimant who may need money over the weekend and who cannot rely on a Saturday postal delivery, or any case where the delays inherent in postal payment would cause hardship.

HARDSHIP

"A4211 If a caller says that waiting for payment by post will cause hardship eg. because he has no money, has insufficient to see him through to the following day or would have difficulty in getting to a post office, the authorising officer should decide whether the giro order should be handed over the counter. A cash payment of Supp. B. should be made only with the authority of an officer not below the rank of Higher Executive Officer and in exceptional circumstances eg. if it is too late for a caller who needs money that day to cash a Giro order."

VOUCHERS

Some offices may try to pay in kind rather than cash, this can lead to all sorts of problems (eg. the voucher is made out to a supermarket that doesn't stock a certain kind of of baby food). This should be resisted for as the 'A' code makes clear payment in kind is only for exceptional circumstances, it is not mean to be an easy way out for DHSS officers on a Friday afternoon.

"A4555 Payment of part of benefit due by means of vouchers on tradesmen (form B68) may be arranged, subject to the concurrance of the manager, in cases of repeated mismanagement or mis-spending."

FURNISHINGS

BEDDING & HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT don't have to be paid for out of weekly benefit but, as the extracts below show, the same Scrooge principles apply. Particularly interesting is A2888 where it is clearly stated that when someone moves house it should be the old area office that should deal with the move. In Glasgow this rule is honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

"A2886 The scale rates are not intended to provide for the purchase or replacement of major items of bedding or household equipment. If, therefore, a claimant shows that he is in need of an essential item, action should be taken in accordance with A2887 - 2892 to consider how the expense should be met."

ESSENTIALS

"A2887 The following items should be regarded as essential:
1) Sheets, blankets and pillows.
2) Curtains and floor-covering (normally linoleum but something more substantial such as matting may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances eg. in an older property with a floor of stone or quarry tiles, etc).
3) Tables and chairs.
4) Beds and mattresses.
5) Easy chairs with perhaps for the larger family, a settee.
6) Items providing storage eg. wardrobes, chests of drawers, kitchen cabinets, where available storage facilities are clearly inadequate.
7) Household appliances, eg. cookers, gas fires. Help should not be given with refridgerators, unless exceptionally no other satisfactory arrangements can be made for food storage, nor with washing machines unless in cases of infirmity or sickness this would be the only reasonable solution to a laundry problem. Regional Office's approval should be obtained before an exceptional needs payment is made for either of these items. This list should be regarded as the normal standard to be applied but is not exhaustive. It should be noted that although a carpet would not normally be considered essential it might be reasonable to clear a hire-purchase debt for one if this would be no more expensive than the cost of providing linoleum in replacement.

OFFICERS

"A2888 Officers should be prepared to assist claimants (by payment of Supp.B., or otherwise as appropriate) to obtain the items in A2887 -

THE THREE WISE VISITORS

I'M SORRY BUT A CARPET IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.....BUT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY FOR STRAW

1) where there is an immediate need because essential items are lacking; a need for such help often arises when a claimant moves to a new home, particularly if the move is from furnished to unfurnished accommodation. While a full appraisal of the situation is usually best undertaken during the course of a visit to the new home, it should be ensured as far as possible, that essential items are available not later than the date of removal. When the move is to an address in the area of another Area Office confusion can arise as to which Area Office -'new' or'old' - should deal with the request for help. Clearly such confusion can result in unnecessary anxiety or inconvenience for the claimant particularly in the case of a single parent with young children. Normally therefore, it should only be necessary for a claimant to deal with one area office, usually the 'old' which should if necessary liase with the 'new' in determining that removal is justified, that the accommodation is available the extent of furnishing required and the means of supplying it, bearing in mind the provisions of A2890;
2) where existing bedding or household equipment is worn out;
3) in hire purchase cases.

NEW ITEMS

"A2889 Where the need is for items in A2887 (1) (2) and (4) an exceptional needs payment should be made to enable the claimant to buy new items. As an exception to this rule second-hand beds (but not separate mattresses which should always be provided new) should be supplied where the claimant is a squatter and the beds are likely to be abandoned, or need replacing, on rehousing. In addition there would be no objection to a second-hand bed being provided where this is the wish of the claimant e.g. where he has made arrangements to obtain one froma friend or relative.
A2891 Where a household a appliance is needed and a safety factor is involved eg. as with an electric cooker, the item obtained should normally be a reconditioned one. Where reconditioned items are not generally available eg. electric irons new should be provided. The cost of repair to and fitting or necessary resiting of essential household appliances should be met by an exceptional needs payment.

TENDERS

Getting estimates before the DHSS will hand over any money can cost the claimant a lot of time and trouble especially for second-hand furniture which may be sold to someone else by the shop before the DHSS hands over the money. As the extract shows the DHSS is quite prepared for the claimant to suffer because of the faults of businessmen.
"A3002 If it is clear that an exceptional needs payment would be justified, the claimant should be asked to obtain 3 competitive estimates for the removal and it should be made clear that he must decline any offer made by a contractor to obtain estimates from other contractors. If because of age, infirmity or other good reason, the claimant is unble to obtain 3 estimates an explanation should be included on form A6 together with a note on the reasonableness of the charge."

PRICE RING

"A3002a Estimates submitted are expected to be genuinely competitive. If, exceptionally there is evidence which suggests that a "price ring" may be operating in cases where it is known that a customer is receiving S.B., or that the estimates were not obtained independently, the facts should be reported to the Regional Office,.....
in no circumstances should either the claimant or the contractor be told why a decision on the claim is deferred."

I ASKED FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DHSS..... BUT THEY ENDED UP GRILLING MY CHILDREN

FIREGUARDS

The reader will have by now gathered, what the claimant always knows, that the DHSS will not offer any more than the basics, for everything else the claimant first has to know and second to ask. The grimmest example is that of fireguards which will only be supplied if asked for (and then with reluctance), note that the fireguard does not appear in the checklist of essential items!

"A3053 Adequate fireguards for open fires are most important where there are young children or infirm people who may fall and injure themselves. If these conditions apply, a fireguard should be regarded as an exceptional need and an exceptional needs payment should be considered. (Under the Children and Young Persons Acts, a person is liable to prosecution if a child under 12, for whom he is responsible dies or is injured as the result of having been exposed by him to the dangers of an unguarded fire or appliance.)"

FUNERALS

Not surprisingly the DHSS show as little concern for the living as they do for the dead. Despite their policy of paying only for the meanest funeral it is still worth applying applying for funeral expenses (even after the funeral) if you are on Supp. B. Your chances on appeal are good that you will be awarded more than the costs of the basic funeral.

Even if you are working but on a low income it is worth applying for an urgent needs payment to help with the funeral expenses. You will almost certainly have to appeal, but you could win. This is of course on top of the miserly death grant of £30.

"A3029 The Supplementary Benefits Commission are not prepared to meet certain inessential expenses (but see A3032) and, to determine the amount of the funeral bill to be considered for exceptional needs purposes, items such as the following should be deducted -

1) transport in excess of hearse (and an extra car for the bearers if one is necessary) and one car;
2) Flowers other than from the claimant;
3)refreshments;
4)obituary notices;
5)monumental masonry;
6) extra cost of purchasing a private plot or familiy grave, i.e. the excess over the cost of a basic plot;
7)excess cost of an expensive coffin.

Ministers' and organists' fees, gratuities and hiring charges for grass mats should not be deducted."

CLOTHING

Clothing is meant to be paid f for out of basic benefit but m and more exceptional needs pay ments are being made to cover this expenditure and it is always worth trying a claim for clothing.

"A2865 People's needs differ according to their mobility, personal preferences and the standards of their particular community. A rigid & uniform standard of bedding clothing and footwear would therefore be undesirable in principle and difficult to apply fairly in practice. It is nevertheless important that claimants in similar circumstances should, as far as is possible be treated in a similar manner. Form BO 40 accordingly sets out a general list of bedding, clothing and footwear. This is intended to serve as a normal guideline to be used when determining need for a particular item. It is not the purpose of form BO40 to provide a comprehensive standard against which the entire stocks of clothing etc. possessed by the claimant (and his family) should be matched. Thus, for example, if a claimant requests an ENP for bedding or a particular item of clothing any ENP made should normally be limited to bringing his own (or his family's) stocks up to form BO40 standard for the item in question."

AGRAPHOBIA..I SEE...THEN I THINK WE CAN DELETE THE SHOE AND THE OVERCOAT FROM YOUR CLAIM.

BO 40

The claimant of course should use form BO40 as a checklist and claim for everything which s/he does not have!

Men and boys

Overcoat or raincoat	1
Jacket or anorak	1
Trousers or jeans	2
Sweater or pullover	1
Socks	3prs
Boots or shoes	2prs
Shirts	2
Under-vests	2
Under-pants	2
Nightwear (pyjamasetc.)	2

Women and girls

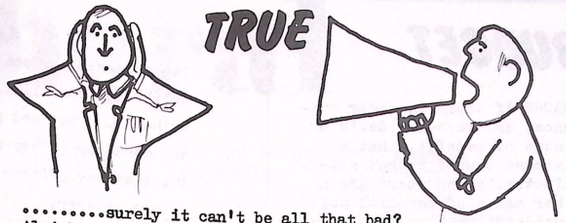
Overcoat or raincoat	1
Cardigan (or for girls jacket)	1
Dresses (a jumper+skirt or trousers= 1 dress)	2
Stockings or tights (or for girls socks)	3pr
Shoes	2
Slips	2
Vests	2
Pants	2
Bras	2
Corset or girdle	1
Nightwear (pyjamasetc.)	2

Blankets	3 per bed in use
Sheets	3 per bed in use
Pillow	1 per person
Pillow cases	2 per person

BUT

"A2867 The quantities set out in form BO 40 should normally be adequate but when there is a special reason the provision may be varied eg:-
1) a person who is bedfast, or who suffers from a serious chest condition...which requires him to keep particularly warm at night may require more than standard quantity of bedding or night clothes but less of outdoor clothing;
2) a person likely to return to employment in the near future may reasonably be expected to manage with less than the standard."

But nevertheless do ask for clothes to start work in.



.....surely it can't be all that bad? Alright then, what about the lady seventy years old. The DHSS susprected her of fraud so they took away her pension book and left her without any money for over a week. And when they realised it was their mistake all along they didn't even apologise. She'd have been better off in prison...at least she would have been fed!

SCALE RATES

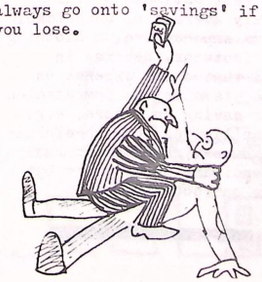
What then are the conditions that the DHSS think warrant an exceptional needs payment for clothing?

"A2881 As indicated in A2721, the scale rates are intended to cover expenditure on the repair and replacement of clothing and footwear. It is particularly important however to make sure that people who have been in receipt of Supp.B. for some years at the level of the scale rates,i.e. without reserves of capital do, in fact, have adequate supplies of clothing and footwear. Special attention should therefore be paid to these needs when such claimants are visited. Apart from this the question of help with the costs of repairs and replacements will, in general, arise only in one or more of the following circumstances:

1) the claimant has lived at or below Supp.B. standards for some time before making a claim and may therefore be in difficulty over the replacement of major items.
2) There are dependent children. This is likely to be the case where there is only one parent and also if the composition of the family does not permit the handing on of clothes from one child to another. Special attention should be given if there are adolescent children but no educational maintenance allowance is in payment and the education authority is not prepared to help under its permissive powers.
3) The claimant or one of his dependents is suffering from respiratory tuberculosis. An adequate stock of warm clothing is essential in such cases.
4) Hardship will result if payment is not made to meet an urgent need."

SAVING

Despite the fact that the DHSS have themselves admitted that the scale rates are not high enough they still pretend for practical purposes that anyone who can't manage to live on it is guilty of bad budgeting. The chief punishment they employ is 'voluntary savings', there is very little voluntary about them as the suggestion that they be introduced is always made when the claimant is in urgent need. An exceptional needs payment is handed over on the condition that the savings be started. It is very important to note that the DHSS can can compulsorily withold any amount of money for any purpose. If you can wait for the exceptional needs payment try an appeal first, you can always go onto 'savings' if you lose.



BUDGET

"A3062 If there is clear evidence, eg. repeated debts or misuse of benefit, that a claimant cannot budget satisfactorily and there are no other means of remedial action, consideration should be given to witholding a portion of current Supp. Ben. to accumulate funds to meet particular items, eg. fuel accounts, clothing needs, as they arise. An attempt should be made to persuade the claimant to agree to this. If necessary, however, the procedure should be applied compulsorily as follows:

1) In both Supplementary Pension and Supplementary Allowance cases, Supp. B. may be withheld for specific bills and eventual payment direct to a third party, eg. to a Gas or Electricity Board under S14(3) of the Act.
2) In Supplementary Allowance cases only, Supp.B. may be witheld by means of a deduction under para 4(1) of Schl to the Supp. B. Act to provide for future unspecified outgoings eg. clothing, for eventual payment to claimant when the need arises."

GRIM SUM

Our final quotation, despite the jargon, clearly shows the sort of miserable arithmetic that has to be carried out by those who administer the welfare state:

"A3046a The amount of the reckonable expense should be the best estimate of the weekly average of unavoidable extra expenditure on clothing and footwear, bearing in mind that extra expense on some items may be compensated by a saving on others, e.g. a man limited to a wheelchair may have higher than normal expenditure on trousers but less on footwear."

PRICES

The prices below come from Appendix 18 of the 'A' code unlike the B040 list, these prices are now published bythe DHSS, but not publicised. This price list is not mandatory, they can give you less, so don't tell the visiting officer that you know where you can get things cheaper.

Bedding

	£
Blankets (cot)	2·95
Blankets (single)	4·10
Blankets (double)	6·50
Terylene quilt (single)	7·50
Terylene quilt (double)	9·00
Pillow	2·25
Pillowcase	0·75
Sheets-cotton (single) pair	8·00
Sheets-cotton (double) pair	11·00
Sheets-flannelette (single) pair	6·50
Sheets-flannelette (double) pair	10·75
Sheets-nylon (single) pair	4·50
Sheets-nylon (double) pair	5·50

Men's Clothing

	£
Cap	2·10
Cardigan	6·50
Dressing gown	7·00
Dressing gown-woollen	11·00
Overcoat	25·60
Pyjamas	6·00
Raincoat	17·00
Shirt	4·00
Shoes	7·50
Slippers	2·40
Socks	0·85
Sports-jacket	20·00
Suit	30·00
Trousers	7·50
Underpants-woollen (long)	4·30
Underpants-woollen (short)	3·95
Underpants-briefs	1·15
Vest-woollen	4·20
Vest-singlet	1·60

Working Clothes

	£
Boiler suit	8·00
Boots	6·35
Donkey-jacket	12·95
Dungarees	5·50
Jeans	7·00
Overalls	5·50
Wellingtons	5·20

Women's Clothing

	£
Boots (ankle)	9·00
Brassiere	1·50
Briefs	0·60
Cardigan	5·00
Corset	4·50
Dress-summerweight	5·45
Dress-winterweight	8·00
Dressing-gown	6·00
Jumper	4·05
Knickers	0·90
Nightdress (standard length)	4·00
Nightdress (full length)	5·00
Overcoat	20·00
Pantie-girdle	2·45
Petticoat	2·40
Pyjamas	6·00
Raincoat	16·00
Shoes	7·50
Skirt	3·95
Slippers	2·20
Stockings-lisle	0·65
Stockings/tights	0·35
Vest-cotton	0·90
Vest-woollen	1·30

Boys' Clothing

	Small £	to Large £
Dufflecoat	10·00	12·00
Jacket/anorak	7·00	8·00
Overcoat	11·00	18·00
Pyjamas	3·00	4·00
Raincoat	9·00	16·00
Shirt	1·50	3·00
Shoes	4·30	6·50
Socks	0·35	0·60
Sweater	2·55	3·15
Trousers-long	4·50	6·05
Trousers-short	2·75	3·35
Underpants		0·65
Vest		0·85
Wellingtons	1·55	3·00

Girls' Clothing

	Small £	to Large £
Brassiere		1·15
Briefs		0·60
Cardigan	2·40	3·30
Dress-summerweight	2·60	5·20
Dress-winterweight	4·10	6·65
Duffle coat	10·50	12·50
Girdle		2·45
Jacket/anorak	5·50	7·50
Jumper	2·40	3·40
Nightdress	2·50	4·00
Overcoat	10·00	15·00
Petticoat		1·65
Pyjamas	3·00	4·00
Raincoat	8·50	10·25
Shoes	4·30	6·50
Skirt	3·15	4·50
Socks	0·45	0·65
Stockings/tights		0·35
Vest		0·65
Wellingtons	1·55	3·00

Baby Clothing

	£
Baby-gro	2·50
Napkins	0·60
Pramsuit	4·50
Vest	0·55
Wrap/Shawl	3·25

Copies of this part of Clydeside Action devoted to the 'A' code can be obtained from the Clydeside Poverty Action Group c/o 234 West Regent Street, Glasgow
one copy.....15p (including postage)
five copies..60p (including postage)
ten copies..£1 (including postage)

peripheral

IN THIS ISSUE CLYDESIDE ACTION TAKES A LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF GLASGOW'S PERIPHERAL HOUSING SCHEMES. JUST AS THEY ARE BECOMING PROVIDED WITH AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF FACILITIES, THE SCHEMES ARE NOW THREATENED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF LARGE-SCALE DEMOLITION. PEOPLE ARE ORGANISING TO CHALLENGE THIS IN DRUMCHAPEL, GARTHAMLOCK AND ELSEWHERE. THE LABOUR PARTY HAS BEEN AT WORK TOO. WILL THE SCHEMES SURVIVE? READ ON.....

Keen observers of the local scene have spotted the first appearance of red blaes in Drumchapel. Red blaes is only too familiar in the inner city and it symbolises the first assault in the destruction of communities through redevelopment. So are the peripheral schemes next in line for the planners' blights? The answer could be yes.....

The residents of Easterhouse, Castlemilk and Drumchapel and Priesthill are under attack. There is talk of demolition, of delaying essential improvements, and even of shelving the community facilities which tenants have been fighting for for years. All these blights are due to officials being unable to agree on the future population of Glasgow, and to politicians wrangling over the future of council housing in the city.

It has been suggested that because of a falling population more and more houses will be falling empty in the coming years. Some 'authorities' think that there could be 20,000 to 30,000 empty council houses by the mid-1980s.

There is a general attack on council housing by the three major political parties in Scotland. Part of this attack is an attempt to increase the level of owner-occupation in order to achieve some imaginary 'tenure balance'. Strange that nobody seems to question tenure balance in Districts such as Bearsden and Milngavie. Some people are even suggesting that huge chunks of the peripheral schemes should be demolished and the land used for private housing.

It seems that Central and local Government can no longer face up to the problems of the peripheral schemes; problems they themselves created. The easy solution is demolition - out of sight is out of mind

Few would argue that the peripheral schemes are ideal places to live in, but on the other hand they're a lot better than some of the alternatives, and the people of the schemes have worked long and hard over the years to get the sort of facilities which should have been provided in the first place. The authorities will have to recognise that there are real people in the schemes, and the people have a right to be consulted and a right to be heard. There is no good reason for demolishing good homes just because George Square can't get its sums right.

vision

the challenge

The Evening Times has recently carried a number of articles about a 'major housing crisis' which is supposed to be looming in Glasgow and which will cost the city a staggering £415m. This figure is totally without foundation. There has also been talk of demolishing large parts of the peripheral schemes and cutting back on the improvement programmes for council houses and the inner city.

fantasy

All this talk is based not on fact, but on the population forecasts of the Registrar General for Scotland and the planners in both Regional and District Councils. The argument goes something like this: "For many years now the population of Glasgow has been falling. If it continues to fall there are going to be many more houses than households. We are therefore going to have a lot of empty houses in the city. So, rather than spend money on houses which need to be improved let's demolish them."

This is a simplistic and irresponsible argument!

In the past, population decline was planned; i.e. people were encouraged to leave Glasgow and move to the New Towns. Because Glasgow Corporation was demolishing more houses than were being built, this loss of population did not result in a dramatic increase in the number of empty houses (some people suggest it is normal for about 4% of houses in a city to be empty). But now that the demolition programme has slowed down a lot, some people argue that the population will continue to decline as it has in the past and, during the late '70s/early '80s, thousands of houses will be falling empty.

experts

But even the 'experts' don't agree. Some say that by 1983 our population will have fallen from the present figure of 830,000 to 712,000 (Registrar General); others say it will only fall to 803,000 (Strathclyde Region). Estimates of the likely numbers of empty houses in 1983 range from a few thousand to an extreme of 45,000. So what is going to happen?

exodus

Obviously the annual net loss of population from Glasgow (which has been around 20,000 people over the last few years) is not going to stop overnight, but for a number of reasons it seems likely that this 'exodus' will slow down in the future, for example;

-overspill agreements have been terminated

-if there is no longer a housing shortage, households who are at present ineligible for a council house could be given one

-the Regional strategy is to regenerate Glasgow and to cut back the development of the New Towns

-Glasgows employment prospects relative to other areas are improving

-if there is no longer a housing shortage people who might otherwise have left Glasgow will be able to stay.

surplus

It seems likely therefore that the population decline will be nowhere near as great as in the past, and consequently the potential surplus will be much lower than some people suggest. Nevertheless, it remains true that there may soon be a housing surplus in Glasgow, although many people will still not be able to find the type of house they want. If we do nothing, several thousand houses might fall empty. But as the new Labour Party document (p.20) apparently argues, we must see this not as a major crisis, but as a golden opportunity to concentrate our attention on improving the existing housing stock; on using council houses to provide the facilities which are so sadly lacking in many housing schemes; on counteracting the major shortage of 5 and 6 apartment houses by knocking two houses into one; on making council houses available to single people and people moving from outside Glasgow etc.

cuts

The immediate problem that we face in Glasgow is that there are politicians and officials who are now trying to use the pessimistic population forecast as a means of arguing for the demolition of large parts of the peripheral schemes, and for cutting back services and facilities which tenants have been fighting to improve. Their argument is that 'since we are likely to have a housing surplus and there are a lot of problems in the peripheral schemes, we might as well use the housing surplus to 'solve' the problems - we'll just demolish the lot! This type of argument completely ignores the fact that thousands of people regard the schemes as home and would not want to move. Even those who are not happy there would be unlikely to get better housing if demolition took place.

challenge

The most important lesson for tenant groups in peripheral areas is that the 'authorities' are in total disarray at the moment. They have no real idea about what might happen in the future and they have few firm ideas about what initiatives they might develop. Thus the time is ripe for tenants groups (as in Drumchapel) to fight for what they want, and prepare themselves to challenge proposals which are put forward for demolishing large parts of our council housing schemes. Surely we have now learned that mass demolition of communities solves nothing: it just adds to peoples problems.

fact

The Peripheral Ares Working Party is producing a report on what to do with the peripheral schemes in the event of a housing surplus. The Working Party includes officials from Glasgow District, Strathclyde Region and the Scottish Development Department. The first draft report of the Working Party, which has been meeting since April, was leaked to the Evening Times on June 16th. The final report is expected to be presented to councillors after the summer recess, sometime in August. A major and unresolved conflict has developed in the Working Party between the Housing Dept., who thought the draft report was bad, and the Planning Dept., who wrote most of it.

fact

The Labour Party has recently produced a policy statement which apparently argues against the doomwatch proposals and predictions of the Peripheral Areas Working Party. The report - Glasgow's Housing: A New Dimension - is to be widely distributed to tenants groups in order to develop discussion about future housing policy.

fact

Talk of a possible housing surplus is already influencing policy, for example;

-environmental revitalisation schemes planned for parts of Castlemilk, Drumchapel and Priesthill are making no progress whatsoever

-Scottish Office has started to put the screws on the tenement rehabilitation programme. Resident-controlled Housing Associations are finding it more and more difficult to get property improved because Scottish Office are complaining about subsidence, costs, the future life of improved houses etc.

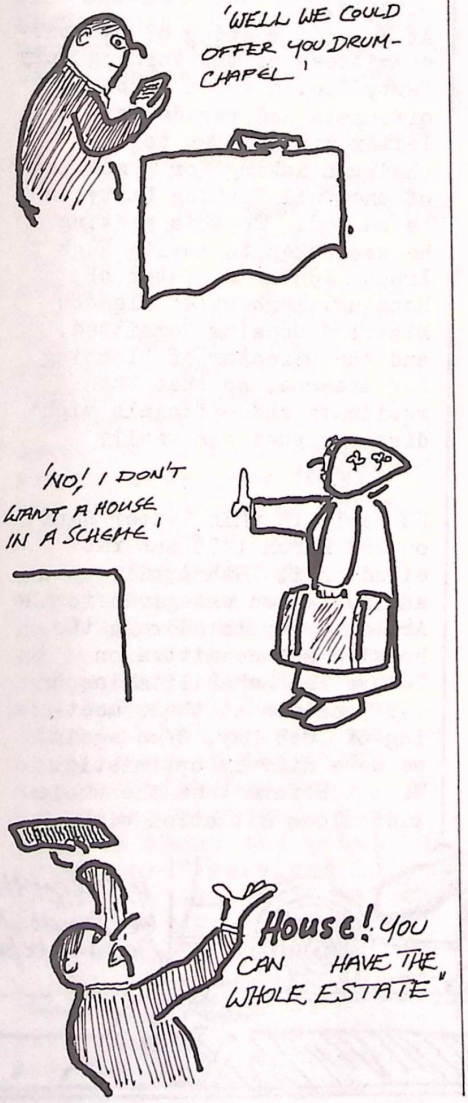
action in drumchapel....

Drumchapel is one of Strathclyde Region's officially designated areas of multiple deprivation, and within Drumchapel, Glasgow District has identified the Kingsridge / Cleddans area as one of acute need.

Speaking of such areas the Glasgow Districts "Housing Policy Proposals to 1983" says that a small minority of tenants in them may be anti-social, but a large proportion of the households have large numbers of children, single parents, unemployed heads of households etc. While not necessarily being problem families, they inevitably cause social and environmental problems when concentrated into small areas.

The report notes that as long as families in these categories are housed in noticeable concentration, some parts of the city will have an abnormally high rate of turnover, and this rate can be directly influenced by the operation of the house-letting regulations.

The proper method of dealing with such areas is seen to be in the dispersal of those elements of the population "at risk", with back up by priority in resource allocation policies to help the dispersed families to settle in the new communities to assimilate them.



This makes good reading and therefore it was with high hopes that representatives of the Kingsridge/Cleddans Action Group met with officials on the evening of 27th August 1977 - the first meeting of the Working Party for the revitalisation of the Kingsridge/Cleddans area of Drumchapel. We were even more optimistic as we considered the Housing Management report on the Environmental Revitalisation of the area - "This area has many deep-rooted problems. A cosmetic treatment will not be sufficient. All departments both District and Regional must provide an input into the area. For this reason it is imperative that a working party consisting of officials and tenants be set up to enable a corporate solution to be found."

Three sub-committees of the Working Party were set up to discuss various aspects of Revitalisation, Housing Management and Allocation Policy, Environmental Improvements, change of use of buildings, community facilities, vandalism, education, roads and transport and Employment.

Street groups were set up by the Action Group to widen participation in the discussion, so that residents could be involved in planning what they saw best for their own immediate area. With the forming of the street groups hope began to spread through the area - at last something was going to be done.

It was only gradually that our initial optimism died. First of all we had niavely believed that the discussions of the sub-committee on Housing allocation and Management Policy would lead to changes. We expected the sub-committee would make recommendations to the working party which in turn would make recommendations to the appropriate council committees - where changes in housing allocation policy would be seriously discussed. All that happened was that we were told categorically that no changes were likely.

In the other sub-committees promising discussions were taking place, but even here we were up against a brick wall how could any plans for nurseries , a neighbourhood building, community facilities be finalised when we could get no information about the size of population we were planning for.

The Kingsridge /Cleddans area has too high a density of population , especially of children under sixteen. In any worthwhile revitalisation selective demolition would be necessary. Housing Management put forward a plan of demolition on a very limited scale with much of it on the perimiters, thus not in any way relieving the areas of greatest density. When we objected and suggested more radical demolition we were told that the District Council would not countenance demolition on any larger scale; in fact they were not at all in favour of demolition.

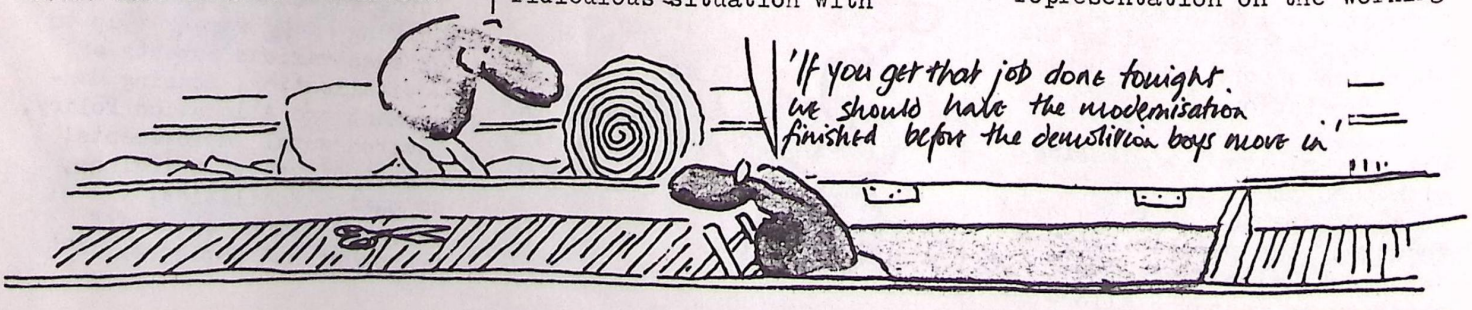
The farcical situation we were in, more redolent of a comic opera plot than a real life situation finally became evident to both officials and residents when we discovered that the District Council were seriously discussing the Regions projected vacancy rate for Drumchapel in 1983 as 92.5%. Here we were giving up evenings and afternoons to attend meetings with officials, to speak with groups of residents discussing plans for an area which might be virtually empty in five years time! Moreover this high vacancy rate was being considered by a group whom we were told were against demolition.

At a joint meeting of two sub-committees of the Working Pary Party i.e. a group of both officials and residents., a letter was written to the chairman asking for a meeting of the full Working Party to be called. To this meeting he was asked to invite Hugh Brown, Junior Minister of Housing, members of Glasgow District Housing Committee, and the Director of Planning for Glasgow, so that both residents and officials might discover what was really happening.

No reply to this letter sent on 2nd March 1978 was received until 19th April, when an invitation was given to the Action Group to address the housing sub-committee on Tenure and Rehabilitation on our position at their meeting of 10th May. Once again we were niavely optimistic. We put before them the whole ridiculous situation with its complete lack of communication. We asked the following questions and made the following demands;

1. What is the district's real committment to participation by residents?
2. Does the working party have any power at all? If so, what are its limits?
3. If demolition is to be a political decision, we want the decision made now.
4. We would suggest that 30% demolition in Kingsridge/Cleddans is necessary.
5. What are the criteria for demolition?
6. What will be the criteria for rehousing displaced families?
7. We demand tenant's participation on the officer's working party discussing peripheral schemes.
8. We would like clarification on how the channels of communication operate at present - both in theory and in practice.
9. We request that each of the three main political parties be represented on the working party.
10. How will the Directors of Planning and Housing evaluate the effectiveness of Local Working Paries? Will we be consulted?
11. We want a detailed timetable for all future developments in the area.
12. We want to know when we can expect policy changes to be made.
13. We want to know when we can expect environmental improvements.
14. What is the region's commitment to the corporate approach in the area?
15. What is the region's financial committment to the area?
16. Does the region see the working party as a purely housing management exercise to mount an environmental improvement programme?

At that meeting of 10th May it was agreed to have all-party representation on the working



party, but this was overturned at the next meeting of the full housing committee! A group of members of the housing committee visited the area - and nothing else has been done.

A working party meeting was to be called as soon as possible after 10 May. The first free date the Chairman had was in July! But he has not been available even in July because of ill health. However something has been achieved. It has obviously been too much for one man to chair all the working parties and a change is to be made here.

Moreover despite the chairman's absence we are to have a working party meeting on the 7 August - the first for five months. How do we approach this meeting? Scarcely with the high hopes we had. With any hope? It is difficult to say. We read in the newspapers of plans for peripheral schemes being made behind closed doors. We read of Bruce Millan's warning to Glasgow not to spend money on housing that will not continue to be useful housing stock. Where does Kingsridge/Cleddans stand in all this? Does anybody really care?

At present it would be better for this area that the working party had never been set up. It is dangerous to raise hopes merely to dash them. The residents of the area have lost all interest - their only interest is to try and get out, as they can see the district deteriorate daily. Many of those leaving were once active in the working party and street groups.

Yet we welcome the coming meeting, because we realise that the only hope for Kingsridge/Cleddans is to persevere in the struggle to revitalise it. To do nothing is a most powerful policy bringing relentless deterioration.

From Secretary Kingsridge/Cleddans Action Group

26, Katewell Avenue,
Drumchapel G15

and in garthamlock....

After suffering for over twenty years under the bus service operated by the Scottish Bus Group, the residents of Garthamlock, Craigend and Ruchazie have formed a Transport Action Group with the prime aim of achieving an adequate bus service

The residents of this area, over 20,000 people are discriminated against to an alarming degree, in that they are unable to use Transcards for cheap regular travel and if travelling to the other side of the city must change buses in the city centre, incurring double fares. The cost of travel on GGPTE buses is ridiculously high, but at least people in Castlemilk for example can travel to Springburn, Cranhill, Easterhouse, Govan or the City City Centre for 28 pence.

The second major criticism of the Scottish Bus Group service is that they work a fixed 5 day week, relying on voluntary overtime on the part of drivers and conductors for a weekend service. The consistent low turnoutof staff at weekends results in a typical frequency of one bus per hour. Scottish Bus Group staff have considerably lower pay levels and are constantly losing staff to the GGPTE.

As criticism of the bus service grew a meeting was held last November attended by Councillor Fulton, convenor of the Highways and Transport Committee SRC. At this meeting representatives of the GGPTE and Scottish Bus Group heard the residents complaints about the total inadequacy of services in the area, especially at weekends. After the meeting, letters of protest were sent to the Road Traffic Commissioners with copies to the GGPTE and the individual companies of the Scottish Bus Group, W. Alexanders and Eastern Omnibuses. Only one reply was received, and that from local M.P. Hugh Brown.

The Transport Action Group called another meeting in April /It was not surprising that there was no representation from either Alexanders or Eastern Scottish.

The main points which emerged were that the Road Traffic Commissioners expressed 'great dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by the Scottish Bus Group having given an undertaking that there will be no reduction in services. The simple fact is that if there was any further reduction in services there would be no buses at all!

No assurance was forthcoming from any party that any improvements would be implemented and Mr. Townend of the GGPTE and C'llr Fulton were strongly criticised by C'llr Ballantyne for their negative approach to the problem. She felt that in the five months since the last meeting something concrete should have been available for presentation to the residents. In fact representation had been made to the Highways Committee who had called for a report from the Director General of the GGPTE and this has not yet been prepared.

A further meeting of the Transport Action Group was held in May and it was decided to inform the GGPTE of their complete dissatisfaction with the meetings so far, and a petition has been sent along with a long list of complaints to the Road Traffic Commissioners, and a similar approach to the Ombudsman is planned.

labour moves....

Once upon a time it was difficult to know what the Labour Party in Glasgow was thinking; even election manifestos consisted of just two paragraphs. It's very different today; the Labour Group on the Council has just produced its third housing discussion document in the past year.

It was prompted by the recent planning proposals for widespread demolition of parts of the peripheral estates as a consequence of the housing surplus in the city and the likely high vacancy rates in these areas. The group argue that housing surplus provides an opportunity to meet housing requirements which to date have taken secnd place to the need for rehousing from slums.

Thus they wish to see the peripheral schemes revitalised by improving the housing stock, providing a full range of community facilities and making housing available to a broader spectrum of the population. Their major proposals are:-

- A full modernisation programme for these estates, including internal and external repairs, maintenance, rewiring and environmental improvements. An annual completion rate of four to five thousand houses is envisaged. The cost of this increased programme is estimated to be almost £30m annually at today's prices; a 50% in the present total housing budget.

OF COURSE ITS BEEN A LOT QUIETER SINCE THAT FAMILY MOVED OUT OF THE 5 APARTMENT UPSTAIRS AND THE COUNCIL MOVED SINGERS IN

- The conversion of medium-sized houses into both small and large houses.
- Making council houses more available to single people, students and short-term contract workers.
- Making council houses more available to groups within the community with special needs - the elderly, the infirm, battered wives, the mentally and physically handicapped who neither want or need to live in institutions.
- The conversion of council houses to provide premises for small firms, shops, local offices for council departments and community facilities such as pre-school playgroups, youth clubs. communal laundries, etc.
- The establishment of a framework of local working parties within which local communities would have an effective voice in defining the needs of the area and developing programmes for action.

The document then, represents a significant break with the past as the city moves into a position of housing surplus. The optimism expressed by the Labour Group is very dependant on a parallel committment from the Scottish Office. As we have seen too often in Glasgow this is not always forthcoming. With SDD now reversing previous policy by cutting grants to Housing Associations the omens are not too good.

The cynic might look at the new paper and consider political motives. With a General Election on the way, what better way of taking on the SNP on their home ground?

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